

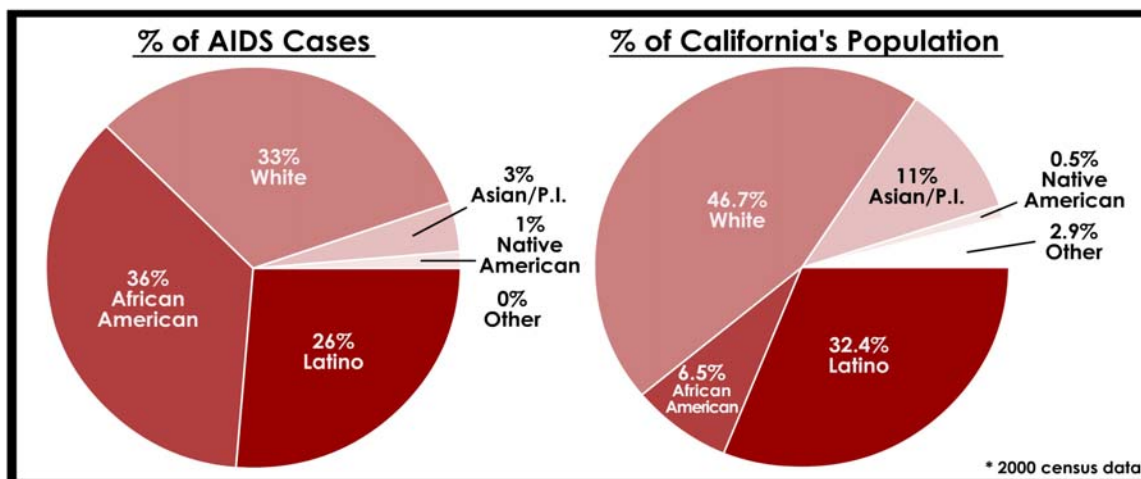


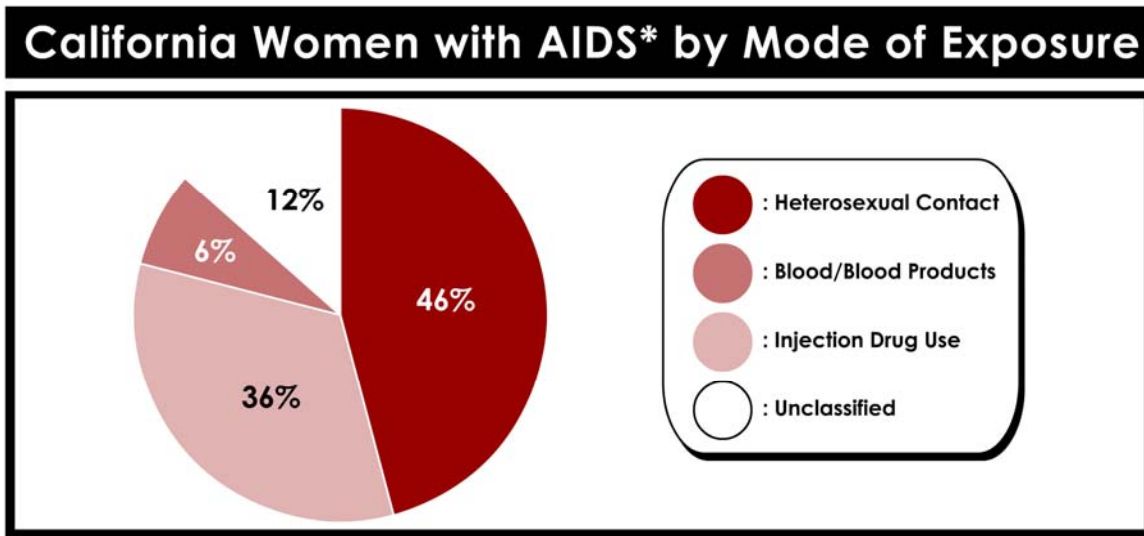
WOMEN AND HIV/AIDS

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- The HIV/AIDS epidemic is a growing health threat to women worldwide, including women in the United States, especially among young women and women of color. It is estimated that nearly 12,000 women are currently living with HIV/AIDS in California.¹
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), women represent nearly 19 percent of cumulative AIDS cases in the United States, and 27 percent of AIDS cases diagnosed in 2004.² The proportion of women diagnosed with AIDS has increased steadily over the last 20 years across all racial/ethnic groups.
- In 2004, African American women and Latinas together represented about 25 percent of all U.S. women, yet accounted for a disproportionate 81 percent of the estimated total of AIDS diagnoses for women.³
- In 2002, HIV/AIDS was the leading cause of death among African American women ages 25-34, the third leading cause of death for African American women ages 35-44, and the fourth leading cause of death for African American women ages 45-54 and Latinas ages 35-44.⁴
- HIV risk factors for some women include being unaware of their male partner's risk for HIV (i.e., sex with men, injection drug use, or sex with multiple partners). Young women may experience sexual inequality in relationships with older men, while other risk factors include biological vulnerability to HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, substance use, as well as socioeconomic and other factors.⁵
- In California through March 31, 2006, women comprised about eight percent of all reported adult/adolescent AIDS cases (11,514 of 139,781).⁶ African American women are infected in greater numbers than their share of the population, accounting for 36 percent of the cumulative AIDS cases, yet comprising less than 7 percent of the state's female population.

California Women with AIDS by Race/Ethnicity reported through March 31, 2006 compared to percentage of California's population*





* 11,514 reported Adult/Adolescent cases reported through March 31, 2006

- For California women, sex with an HIV-infected male is the most common route of transmission, accounting for 46 percent of AIDS cases.
- Sharing infected needles and syringes is the second most common route of transmission for women, accounting for 36 percent of all AIDS cases.
- Eighty-three percent of females diagnosed with AIDS are women of childbearing age.
- Women over 50 represent nearly 14 percent of the total number of reported female AIDS cases. Most women in this age group become infected by having unprotected sex with an infected male.
- Among individuals accessing publicly-funded HIV counseling and testing sites in California from January 2001-December 2003, 36 percent of all HIV tests were provided to women, and women accounted for 15 percent of all positive test results.⁷
 - African American women were over 3 times, and Latinas were 1.3 times more likely to test positive for HIV, than White women.
 - Over half of the African American women and Latinas who tested positive and reported heterosexual sex as their only risk, were unaware of their partners' risk.
- Women who are pregnant and infected with HIV can also infect their babies. Good prenatal care, the use of HIV medications, and avoiding breast-feeding have resulted in decreased mother-to-child transmission.
 - The number of infants and children diagnosed with AIDS each year has dropped dramatically since 1992, and the annual number of AIDS-related deaths in children has decreased as well.



- In fiscal year 2005-06, the Office of AIDS allocated over \$480,000 from specifically designated CDC funds for the prevention of HIV perinatal transmission to assist in implementing HIV rapid testing at California's labor and delivery hospitals. For pregnant women who present to labor and delivery with an undocumented HIV status, HIV rapid testing can determine a woman's HIV status in as little as 20 minutes; if positive, medication and treatments can be offered immediately during labor and delivery to further decrease the possibility of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.
- California's Early Intervention Program (EIP) has 34 EIP sites that serve HIV-infected men and women. Four of the 34 sites provide services primarily to women and are located in Los Angeles (2), Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties. EIP sites provide comprehensive HIV care, treatment, and prevention services in an environment sensitive to women's needs.
- In 2005, women accounted for over 2,700 clients, or nearly ten percent of California's AIDS Drug Assistance Program beneficiaries.

¹ California Department of Health Services, Office of AIDS, HIV/AIDS Case Registry data as of March 31, 2006.

² CDC HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet: HIV/AIDS among Women – April 2006.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ California Department of Health Services, Office of AIDS, HIV/AIDS Case Registry data as of March 31, 2006.

⁷ California Department of Health Services, Office of AIDS, Counseling and Testing Data. January 2001-December 2003.





Women and HIV/AIDS in California What Women Need to Know



It is important to know that:

- HIV is the virus that causes AIDS;
- Anyone who has unprotected sex or shares needles or syringes can become infected with HIV;
- A person can look and feel healthy and be infected with HIV;
- An HIV-infected woman can infect her baby during pregnancy, childbirth, and breast-feeding.

Think about getting tested for HIV if you (or your partner):

- Have ever shared needles or syringes;
- Have ever had vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an HIV-infected person without using a condom;
- Have multiple sex partners and do not always use a condom;
- Have or had a sexually transmitted disease;
- Have ever used alcohol or drugs and do not remember what happened;
- Are pregnant or thinking about having a baby.

Early signs of HIV infection in some women can include:

- Frequent 'female' problems or an abnormal pap smear;
- Pain in the pelvic area when you do not have your period;
- Yeast infections that do not go away or keep coming back.

HIV can be spread from one person to another by:

- Blood (*sharing needles or syringes; mother-to-infant*);
- Semen and vaginal fluids (*unprotected sex*);
- Breastmilk (*breast-feeding*).

You CANNOT become infected with HIV by:

- Being around someone at home, work, school, or daycare who has HIV;
- Casual contact such as closed mouth kissing, hugging, and shaking hands;
- The air, swimming pools, or touching things such as drinking glasses, doorknobs, or toilet seats;
- Mosquito or other insect bites.

If you think you might be infected with HIV, or if you have AIDS:

See your health care provider or call the AIDS Hotline for a referral. Ask what you can do to protect yourself and others. Look in your phone book under "community services" or "AIDS information" for organizations such as the health department, local HIV/AIDS organizations, and women's health clinics. Programs are available through county health departments for low-income Californians who cannot afford to pay for HIV-related health care.



To find out more information about HIV/AIDS, or about getting an HIV test, call or visit:

- The California Department of Health Services, Office of AIDS Web site at www.dhs.ca.gov/AIDS.
- The California AIDS Hotline (English/Spanish) at **(800) 367-AIDS (2437)** or (888) 225-AIDS (TDD) or visit the California AIDS hotline Web site: www.AIDShotline.org for links to services in your area.
- The National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Information Line (800) 232-4636 ([800] CDC-INFO) or visit the National Web site: www.cdc.gov/hiv.

